

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/026,450
Response dated February 6, 2004
Reply to OA of October 6, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-12 (canceled)

Claim 13 (New): A paper process apparatus including:

a first paper storing section for storing papers for payment,

a second paper storing section, for storing papers unsuitable for payment,

a temporary storing section, for accumulating papers delivered thereto,

a paper delivery section that is connected to the temporary storing section for discharging in a block the accumulated papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section,

a first conveyance path extending between the first paper storage section and the temporary storing section for payment one by one from the first paper storing section to the temporary storing section, whereby the papers for payment which have been conveyed from the first paper storing section are stored in the temporary storing section, and

a second paper conveyance path communicating with, but diverging from, the first conveyance path, for conveying, to the second paper storing section, papers determined by discriminating means to be unsuitable for payment among the papers for payment which have been conveyed from the first paper storing section, whereby the papers unsuitable for payment which have been conveyed from the first paper storing section are stored in the second paper storing section,

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the paper processing apparatus comprising:

a third conveyance path suitable to receive papers from the exterior and connecting with the first conveyance path for conveying exterior papers which have been received from the exterior to the first conveyance path.

Claim 14 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising an exterior paper processing mechanism including a portion of said first conveyance path forming a conveyance path connected with the third conveyance path and the temporary storing section for leading the exterior papers from the third conveyance path to the temporary storing section through the first conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the temporary storing section are accumulated in the temporary storing section and said portion of said first conveyance path communicating with said second conveyance path for leading the exterior papers which have been temporarily stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second paper storing section through the second conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second paper storing section are stored in the second paper storing section.

Claim 15 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the second conveyance path of the exterior paper processing mechanism extends between the first conveyance path and the second paper storing section and leads the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second paper storing section

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through the second conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second paper storing section are stored in the second paper storing section, means operative to selectively return the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the exterior through the paper delivery section, and means operable by a user for activating the exterior paper processing mechanism to deliver exterior papers to the second storing section or to the exterior.

Claim 16 (New): A paper processing apparatus comprising:

- a paper delivery unit including
- a first paper storing section for storing papers for payment,
- a second paper storing section for storing papers unsuitable for payment,
- a temporary storing section for accumulating papers delivered thereto,
- a paper delivery section for discharging in a block the accumulated papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section, and

- a first conveyance path extending between the first paper storage section and the temporary storing section for conveying papers for payment one by one from the first paper storing section to the temporary storing section, whereby the papers for payment which have been conveyed from the first paper storing section are stored in the temporary storing section,

- a paper receipt unit arranged on the paper delivery unit for receiving exterior papers one by one from the exterior, the paper delivery unit including a third conveyance path and being operative

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to convey the exterior papers to the first conveyance path upon receiving the exterior papers from the paper receipt unit, and

the paper unit including a fourth conveyance path communicating with the exterior through a paper receiving aperture and connecting with the third conveyance path for conveying exterior papers to the third conveyance path upon receipt of exterior papers from the exterior through the paper receiving aperture.

Claim 17 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the paper delivery unit further comprises an exterior paper processing mechanism including a portion of said first conveyance path forming a conveyance path connected between the third conveyance path and the temporary storing section for leading the exterior papers from the third conveyance path to the temporary storing section through the first conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the temporary storing section are accumulated in the temporary storing section, and said portion of said first conveyance path communicating with said second conveyance path for leading the exterior papers which have been temporarily stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second paper storing section through the second conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second paper storing section are stored in the second paper storing section.

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Claim 18 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the second conveyance path of the exterior paper processing mechanism extends between the first conveyance path and the second paper storing section and leads the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second paper storing section through the second conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second paper storing section are stored in the second paper storing section, means operative to selectively return the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the exterior through the paper delivery section, and means operable by a user for activating the exterior paper processing mechanism to deliver exterior papers to the second storing sections or to the exterior.

Claim 19 (New): A paper processing apparatus comprising:

a cassette mounting section for receiving and supporting at least one first cassette which is removable and stores therein papers for payment and at least one second cassette which is removable and stores therein store-only papers;

a paper delivery mechanism which includes

a temporary storing section for accumulating papers delivered thereto,

a paper delivery section connected to the temporary storing section for discharging in a block the accumulated papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section, and

a first conveyance path extending between the at least one first cassette and the temporary storage section for conveying the papers for payment one by one from the at least one first cassette to the temporary storing section, whereby the papers for payment which have been conveyed from the at least one first cassette are stored in the temporary storing section;

a paper collecting mechanism which includes a second paper conveyance path communicating in divergent relation with respect to the first conveyance path and being connected to at least one of the second cassettes, the paper collecting mechanism leading to the second cassette through the second paper conveyance path being operative to convey papers unsuitable for payment among the papers for payment which have been conveyed from the first cassette;

an exterior paper processing mechanism which includes a third conveyance path suitable to receive papers from the exterior and connected to the first conveyance path for conveying exterior papers which have been received by the third conveyance path from the exterior, the first conveyance path of the exterior paper processing mechanism having a portion connecting with the temporary storing section for leading the exterior papers from the third conveyance path to the temporary storing section through the first conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the temporary storing section are temporarily stored in the temporary storing section, said portion of said first conveyance path communicating with said second conveyance path for leading the exterior papers which have been temporarily stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second cassette through the second conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second cassette are stored in the second cassette.

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Claim 20 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein, the second conveyance path of the exterior paper processing mechanism extends between the first conveyance path and the second cassette and leads the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second cassette through the second conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second cassette are stored in the second cassette, said second conveyance path being further alternately operative to return the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the exterior through the paper delivery section, and means operable by a user for selectively activating the exterior paper processing mechanism.

Claim 21 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the cassette mounting section contains first mounting box structure operative to support at least one first cassette mounting box for mounting a first cassette and a second mounting box structure operative to support at least one second cassette mounting box for mounting the second cassette, said cassette mounting section further including mounting box structure for mounting at least one optional cassette which is either one of the first cassette and the second cassette.

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Claim 22 (New): A paper processing apparatus comprising:

a cassette mounting section containing structure for receiving and removably supporting at least one first cassette which is operable to store therein papers for payment and at least one second cassette which is operable to store therein store-only papers;

a paper delivery unit which includes:

a paper delivery mechanism having:

a temporary storing section operable to accumulate papers delivered thereto,

a paper delivery section connected to the temporary storing section for discharging in a block the accumulated papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section, and

a first conveyance extending between the first cassette and the temporary storing section for conveying papers for payment one by one from the first cassette to the temporary storing section through the first conveyance path whereby the papers for payment which have been conveyed from the first cassette are stored in the temporary storing section,

a paper collecting mechanism including a second paper conveyance path communicating with, but diverging from, the first conveyance path and communicating with the second cassette for leading through the second paper conveyance path papers among the papers for payment determined by discriminating means to be unsuitable for payment which have been conveyed from the first cassette, and

a paper receipt unit disposed on the paper delivery unit and containing means for receiving exterior papers one by one from the exterior,

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wherein the paper delivery unit includes an exterior paper processing mechanism having a third conveyance path connected between the first conveyance path and the temporary storing section and operative to lead the exterior papers which have been received from the paper receipt unit by the third conveyance path to the temporary storing section through the first conveyance path whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the temporary storing section are stored in the temporary storing section, and a second conveyance path connecting with the third conveyance path for leading the exterior papers which have been temporarily stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second cassette whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second cassette are stored in the second cassette, and

wherein the paper receipt unit includes an exterior paper conveying mechanism having a fourth conveyance path communicating at one end with the exterior and at the other end to the third conveyance path whereby an exterior paper conveying mechanism leads exterior papers from the exterior to the third conveyance path.

Claim 23 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the second conveyance path of the exterior paper processing mechanism communicates with the temporary storing section to lead the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary storing section to the second cassette whereby the exterior papers which have been led to the second cassette are stored in the second cassette means operative to selectively return the exterior papers which have been stored in the temporary storing section from the temporary

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storing section to the exterior through a paper delivery section, and means operable by a user for activating the exterior processing mechanism to deliver exterior papers to the second storing section or to the exterior.

Claim 24 (New): A paper processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the cassette mounting section contains first mounting box structure operative to support at least one first cassette mount box for mounting a first cassette, a second mounting box structure operative to support at least one second cassette mounting box for mounting a second cassette, and including mounting box structure for at least one optional cassette which is either one of the first cassette mounting box and the second cassette mounting box.